U.S. Department of Education 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

A Public School - 13NY1

School Type (Public Schools):	Charter	Title 1 ▽	Magnet	Choice	
Name of Principal: Mrs. Kath	erine Kloss				
Official School Name: Elsme	ere Elementa	ary School			
School Mailing Address:	247 Delawa Delmar, NY	re Avenue 7 12054-1499			
County: Albany	State Schoo	l Code Number	*: <u>010306060</u>	003	
Telephone: (518) 439-4996	E-mail: kl	oskels@bcsd.ne	eric.org		
Fax: (518) 439-7546	Web site/U	RL: www.bcsc	l.k12.ny.us/elsi	<u>nere</u>	
I have reviewed the informatic - Eligibility Certification), and				ity requirement	s on page 2 (Part I
			,	Date	
(Principal's Signature)					
Name of Superintendent*: <u>Dr.</u>	Thomas Do	ouglas Superin	itendent e-mail	tdouglas@bcs	d.neric.org
District Name: Bethlehem Cer	ntral School	District Distric	ct Phone: (518)	439-7098	
I have reviewed the information - Eligibility Certification), and			ling the eligibil	ity requirement	s on page 2 (Part I
			·	Date	
(Superintendent's Signature)					
Name of School Board Preside	ent/Chairper	son: Ms. Diane	Giacone Steve	<u>r</u>	
I have reviewed the information - Eligibility Certification), and					s on page 2 (Part I
			, 	Date	
(School Board President's/Cha	airperson's S	Signature)			

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

^{*}Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

- 1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
- 2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
- 3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
- 4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
- 5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
- 6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
- 7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
- 8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
- 9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
- 10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
- 11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the distric	t 5	Elementary schools (includes K-8
	1	Middle/Junior high schools
	1	High schools
	0	K-12 schools
	7	Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure:	17837	

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: <u>Suburban</u>
- 4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
- 5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		
PreK	0	0	0		
K	20	27	47		
1	25	21	46		
2	22	25	47		
3	25	29	54		
4	25	25	50		
5	20	26	46		
6	0	0	0		
7	0	0	0		
8	0	0	0		
9	0	0	0		
10	0	0	0		
11	0	0	0		
12	0	0	0		
To	Total in Applying School: 290				

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:	0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
	4 % Asian
	2 % Black or African American
	1 % Hispanic or Latino
	0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
	90 % White
	3 % Two or more races
	100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 2%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	3
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	7
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	290
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school:	2%
Total number of ELL students in the school:	1
Number of non-English languages represented:	
Specify non-English languages:	

Bosnian and Chinese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals:	8%
Total number of students who qualify:	24

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services:	13%
Total number of students served:	40

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

5 Autism	Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	9 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	2 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	20 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	2 Traumatic Brain Injury
0 Mental Retardation	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
1 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	14	0
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	4	15
Paraprofessionals	12	0
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	4	10
Total number	35	25

12.	Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school
	divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools	14.	For	schools	ending	in grad	e 12	(high	schools	:(:
--	-----	-----	---------	--------	---------	------	-------	---------	-----

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size:	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	%
Enrolled in a community college	 %
Enrolled in vocational training	 %
Found employment	 %
Military service	 %
Other	 %
Total	0%

15. Indicate whether y	our school has previou	sly received a National	Blue Ribbon Schools award:

0	No
0	Vac

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

The mission of Elsmere Elementary is to be a community of lifelong learners who nurture and inspire the highest standards in academics, accountability and character to contribute to an ever-changing world.

Our theme is PRIDE: Personal Best, Respect and Responsibility, Integrity, Determination and Enthusiasm, which guides us each day in our work and play. As we immerse ourselves in hands-on curriculum and learning, we focus on the importance of responsibly applying academic skills. Elsmere School provides a safe place for children to aspire to the highest academic standards. Our parents and staff have a strong partnership focused on providing the best environment for the children.

Located on the main street of Delmar, a bustling suburb of Albany, New York, Elsmere Elementary School has been a "place to love and grow" for neighborhood children, families and staff for over 85 years. Elsmere has a long-standing reputation of welcoming and encouraging all who step through the doors. From the time children visit the school for treasure hunts as pre-schoolers to when they return as seniors to be recognized for their accomplishments, students are supported in reaching their highest goals. Families enjoy these traditions as much as students.

We are very proud of our consistently high scores on the New York State assessments, generally the highest in our district. However, we do not make testing the focus of our academic program. Rather, our academic emphasis is on learning for application, success and enjoyment. Our active recycling, composting and gardening programs are a few examples of how this focus allows us to expand learning to include hands-on, minds-on activities that move beyond our school building.

The community plays an important supporting role in educating our children. Neighboring businesses regularly visit classes, linking learning to life for students. Students look forward to talking with bankers, pet shop owners, contractors, doctors, florists, restaurant owners and many parents to learn more about their environment and how their lessons will help them later in life. And while our budget for field trips is constrained, walking trips to these local businesses provide students great insight.

Elsmere students take pride in helping others. Our Buddy Program pairs younger and older students for year-long learning activities. Buddies work together weekly on projects usually related to a theme. Some of these projects, such as yearly calendars, are given to local senior citizens at our annual "Giving Day" ceremony. Older students also spearheaded the KTA (Kids Teachers Association) with a mission of creating a positive climate in and out of school. This ambitious group, led by our guidance counselor, recently partnered with high school students to collect 200 items of clothing for a group which supports those in need.

One of five elementary schools in the highly recognized Bethlehem Central School District, Elsmere staff is a part of a continuous search for improved practices. Teachers and support staff participate in high-quality, job-imbedded professional development, such as visits with a math specialist. Our faculty selected to work together this year to analyze the new Common Core Curriculum in English Language Arts. To this end, all faculty are reading the same guiding text and meeting to share strategies and successes. Our school-run data analysis team guides colleagues in this endeavor.

Technology integration is a growing part of our instructional program. Students have access to laptops, iPads and other learning tools. Some examples of the use of technology include e-pals for students regularly communicate with children around the globe, Skype, which students use to interview authors and scientists, and Raz-kids a grant-sponsored individualized reading program.

Elsmere is the proud home to the district's two intensive skills special education classes. Students in these classes have profound disabilities requiring highly specialized instruction in small group settings. These students and their families are very much a part of our school community through participation in school activities, school responsibilities and reverse-mainstreaming.

Health and wellness are an important part of the Elsmere program. Our physical education teacher, who was recently named the Capital District Coach of the Year for his leadership of the district varsity soccer team, leads our "Hoops for Heart" program which draws hundreds to be physically active while raising funds for the American Heart Association. Additionally, our Parent Teacher Association has embarked on a large-scale fund raising project to replace our aging playground, which provides a safe place to be physically active for students, younger neighborhood children and youngsters from a neighboring daycare.

Elsmere is a caring and supportive environment that exemplifies teamwork in making a child's journey meaningful and enjoyable. Carefully planned instruction combined with spontaneous exploration builds solid and exciting learning experiences for our students and staff as well. Families are a valued part of our school. Together, we create a wonderful "place to love and grow."

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A. In New York State, third through eighth grade students take state exams in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. This testing program was designed to determine the efficacy of instruction and to identify students in need of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in order to be on target for meeting college and career readiness standards. With New York State's adoption of the Common Core Curriculum, exams will measure student acquisition of this curriculum, student growth from year to year, and teacher and school effectiveness.

The number of correct answers a student gives on a test is converted into the student's scale score. The scale score makes it possible to compare performance on the tests across different grades. Scale scores are divided into four performance levels.

Level 1: Below Standard - Student does not demonstrate an understanding of the content knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

Level 2: Meets Basic Standards - Student performance demonstrates a partial understanding of the content knowledge and skills expected at this grade level

Level 3: Meets Proficiency Standards - Student performance demonstrates an understanding of the content knowledge and skills expected in the grade level.

Level 4: Exceeds Proficiency Standards - Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the content knowledge and skill expected in the grade level.

A minimum of three times a year, we also administer the nationally normed AIMSweb assessments to collect information about the reading skills of students at all grade levels. We monitor students' progress, paying particular attention to their rate of improvement (ROI). If a student's ROI is below expected in foundational reading skills, fluency or comprehension, specific additional interventions are provided and student's progress is monitored until a consistent pattern of expected growth is evidenced. Beginning in the fall, math progress will also be monitored with this program.

B. Since 2006, Elsmere students have consistently scored at high levels on New York State standardized assessments. Each year, our faculty analyzes state and local assessment results to identify areas of focus for individual and group instruction.

A glance at most New York schools score history will indicate a dip in scores three years ago. Prior to the 2009-10 administration of the New York State assessments, New York State Education Department set the proficiency (level 3) score for ELA and math at 650 scaled score or better. During the 2009-10 school year, the cut scores were raised to meet higher standards. This change was recommended by NYS Commissioner of Education to the Board of Regents based on research that suggested this would more accurately indicate "proficiency" on these exams. This "raising of the bar" resulted in a drop of the number of students' statewide meeting proficiency on the state ELA and Math exams. It also led to an increased number of students identified for academic supports in the core areas of math and English Language Arts.

When we receive our students' New York State assessment results, our faculty analyzes this data to plan for instruction. This year, the average percentage score on nearly every question was above the proficiency level. However, there were some items that indicated a need for enhanced instruction.

Analyzing sub-group scores for trends does not yield reliable information at Elsmere due to our low sub-group population. Because of this, one student constitutes a deceptively large percentage which makes the data not statistically sound. Still, we are able to use information from these assessments to provide individualized instruction as we do for all students.

We utilize a three-tiered system of intervention to match instruction with the individual needs of students. As tiers increase, the level of individualization and support increases to provide students with targeted instruction on areas of need.

As our students traditionally have done so well on New York State assessments, we have made good use of the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RtI) model for assessment, progress monitoring and focused instruction. RtI assessments are on-going and provide us more information than statewide assessments.

All students are a part of the first tier of assessments and instruction. We regularly administer benchmark assessments in reading and math, analyze these results and formulate grade-level interventions where needed. For example, our AIMSweb winter benchmark assessment in letter naming fluency for kindergarten indicated growth below the national norm. Faculty responded by training fifth graders to reinforce and time-test their kindergarten buddies on this skill in a game-like manner. Within just two weeks, kindergartners began to show a marked improvement in this important foundational reading skill.

Tier-two interventions and related assessments are provided for students whose needs are identified through state tests, district screening tools and who have not made progress with tier-one interventions. Math and reading specialists work with students individually and in small groups in a pull-out model focusing on the skills the students find most challenging. Before and after school tutoring programs run by teachers and college students are also available for identified students. In these sessions, research based strategies, such as incremental rehearsal, are applied to help students reach academic goals. For tier-two students, progress monitoring occurs more frequently and results are analyzed to determine the next course of action.

Occasionally, a student may not make adequate progress with tier one or two interventions as indicated by both formal and informal data. In this case, tier-three interventions are put into place and special education assessment may be pursued.

On-going, valid assessment is a part of the fabric of instruction at Elsmere. We recognize that "teaching to the test" is not necessary if solid, focused education is in place.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The faculty of Elsmere Elementary School is committed to the effective use of data to inform instruction. In the past, an analysis of New York State standardized test data provided teachers with information on general standards and individual student needs which were then used to modify and enhance instruction. This information was shared with parents and the public through individualized letters, district publications and presentations. New York State test data for Elsmere has generally been very high with most students scoring in the proficient or advanced categories. While this is a positive, it provided us with minimal instructional guidance. This year, available data was more limited due to changes in our state testing system. To replace and supplement this data, the faculty of our district adopted additional assessment and data gathering tools.

To provide guidance in strengthening math instruction, last year our district began a math interim assessment program following the model created by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. The district elementary math cabinet, along with our math supervisor and principals, wrote four interim math assessments based on the new Common Core curriculum for each grade level. Just before the administration of each assessment, teachers predict how they think their students will perform on each item of the assessment.

After the test is given, results are submitted to a computer-based program that generates an item analysis. Teachers then work in teams to compare their predictions with actual performance, identify individual and group areas of need and plan for related instruction. This routine has helped identify areas of need including a weakness in general word-problem solving. Teachers then addressed identified needs through modified instruction. In solving word problems for example, more emphasis is now placed in asking students to find a variety of ways to arrive at an answer. This requires students to more fully understand and explain their thinking rather than to simply apply algorithms.

To measure progress and inform instruction in reading skills, the district has adopted the nationally normed AIMSweb program. Administered to all elementary students at the beginning, middle and end of the year, AIMSweb provides a quick glimpse of how students perform in reading compared to others across the nation. Our district further uses this data as one criterion for identifying students for additional support through both remedial and enriched instruction. For students falling above or below national norms, specialized programs are created. These included Academic Intervention Service (AIS) instruction with a certified reading teacher several times a week, small group work with a special education teacher and book studies led by our librarian. Such services are suggested by our Child Study Team, which is a group of therapists, specialists and other faculty who work directly with students at our school. Parents are an important part of this process as they help the team to understand their child's learning history and interests in formulating instructional supports. Once students have been identified for additional support, their progress is regularly monitored with AIMSweb nationally normed probes. After six data points are collected, these results are again analyzed to determine if the programs put into place are assisting in students' acquisition of skills and knowledge. If so, the intervention continues. If not, new interventions are suggested by the Child Study Team.

Results of standardized assessments are regularly shared with students, parents and the community. AIMSweb reading assessments are sent to all parents three times a year. Individual reports explain student results compared to national norms and show student progress. Parents of third, fourth and fifth graders receive individual student reports regarding their child's achievement on the New York State ELA and Math tests. Our New York State School Report Card is presented at a school board meeting, a Parent Teacher Association meeting and referred to on our district website. Parents are apprised of their child's day-to-day progress through parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, letters home and e-mails.

While formal, standardized assessment is a small part of our overall curriculum, informal assessment and evaluation of student progress occurs daily. Students and teachers use rubrics to analyze writing. Spelling and math fact tests help students set and meet learning goals. Students create and assess various presentations in the arts, technology use and physical education. Teachers assess their own performance by looking at their students' growth data on formal and informal assessments. Assessments such as these are combined to help the students and faculty of Elsmere to be reflective learners, continuously and actively looking for ways to improve efforts to achieve their goals.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Elsmere Elementary is fortunate to be a part of a strong network of educators, dedicated to growing professional, supporting colleagues in this endeavor and strengthening education for all Bethlehem students.

Most Elsmere teachers serve on district cabinets or committees. Cabinets include math, science, social studies, language arts, reading and library. Members of these cabinets review research, share their practical knowledge, plan implementation of state requirements and create guidance documents for colleagues. Cabinets maintain "living documents" on the Rubicon Atlas curriculum- mapping site to provide teachers across the district the most updated instructional materials.

Committees with Elsmere representation include environmental, technology and safety committees. Members of committees discuss how to enhance our school and district programming and operations. For

example, our environmental representative was instrumental in beginning district composting and school gardens.

Teachers also formally and informally share best practices with colleagues in other forums. For example, after attending a fluency workshop presented by a top researcher in the field, our reading teacher and her colleagues conducted a fluency presentation for all elementary teachers.

Elsmere Elementary is home to the district's two elementary intensive skills classrooms, an innovative program for students with a high level of special education support. This program was started seven years ago to offer such students an education within their home district. Our current intensive skills teachers and related service providers helped to design these programs. These serve as model programs for other districts, hosting visits, guidance and consultation for other districts seeking to implement this approach.

Since 2010 we have used a wiki, a website which allows users to add or modify content via a web browser, as a school-wide communication tool, sign up area and repository for forms and documents. Following the success of this method, our school principal hosted workshops for district faculty during the school year and the summer. Wikis are now commonplace in our district both for classroom teachers and departments.

Our school nurse is a senior health care provider in our district. In this role, she provides collegial guidance to her counterparts at other schools. Our nurse assists in creating district protocols for health issues ranging from food allergy safety to head lice response.

Recognizing the importance of occupational therapy exercise for the general education population, our occupational therapist hosted a staff "open house", providing information and ideas for practical implementation in classrooms.

Elsmere is home to a dedicated group of professionals who actively share their expertise with colleagues across the district.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Elsmere Elementary School is the heart of the Elsmere community. What transpires at school influences our students and their families. What happens in the lives of "our children" has this same strong impact on our staff and faculty. Many of our staff are also Elsmere parents, able to offer a unique perspective to enhancing our school community. Students in our school have a wide range of needs and learning characteristics and our families have diverse and unique backgrounds. The strategies that we found to be most effective in maintaining and developing strong home-school relationships are clear communication, an open invitation for community adults to share their skills and a plethora of family events.

The two-way communication we utilize is essential in allowing parents to be an integral part of their child's educational environment. In addition to e-mails and phone correspondence, teachers share blogs, wikis and newsletters with families. We have a school website and send out important information through our School News Notifier. Elsmere's open and trusting relationships with families makes parents feel comfortable sharing even the most sensitive situations with school staff. Parents know they can talk freely and confidentially. In times of need, we come together as a school family to support one another.

In the spirit of "It takes a village to raise a child", parents, grandparents and community members are frequently invited to share their skills and knowledge with students. Elsmere adults regularly volunteer to extend students' educational experience through programs such as Junior Achievement, Jump Start Literacy, Earth Week activities, Elsmere Kitchen Garden, Delmar Business Visits, Farm-to-You week, firefighter visits and numerous guest speaking engagements.

The many family-school programs we provide include long standing traditions and continuously evolving events that help foster this home-school connection. Opportunities for families to participate in activities before, during and after school include something for everyone such as monthly breakfasts, honoring family veterans, Senior Assembly honoring high school seniors that attended Elsmere, Math Night, Grandparents Lunch, Valentine's Family Dance, Potluck dinners, 50th day Sock-Hop, Field Day, Community Garage Sale, Science Fair, Art Show, Student / Family Collections display case, Hoops for Heart, Family Photo display, class plays, Gently Used Book Sale and American Education Week.

The combination of open communication, adult involvement and special activities help students develop a broader foundation in education, a love of learning and a "home away from home".

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Elsmere Elementary aims to provide high quality education for every student. We accomplish this through implementing a rigorous, standards-based curriculum based on the New York State Common Core Learning Standards providing guidance in each subject area.

We see literacy as one of the cornerstones for success in school and life. Literacy begins as students learn to read and write and continues across all curricular disciplines and grade levels. In primary grades, phonics instruction is emphasized in conjunction with spelling, grammar, fluency, listening skills, comprehension strategies and a general enjoyment of reading and writing. Through this, students are given a solid literacy foundation. In intermediate grades, English language arts instruction curriculum evolves from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", with instructional shifts as identified by New York State:

- Balancing informational text and literature
- Staircase of Complexity
- Text-Based Answers
- Writing from Sources
- Using academic vocabulary

We use a guided reading approach along with shared reading, read-alouds and independent reading, which enables teachers to select appropriate texts for students and enhance each student's understanding.

Writing enables students to learn more effectively than any other area of instruction. Students are guided to write to explore their thoughts, observations, and refine new information. Writing is a process as it progresses from conception to final product.

The New York State math curriculum has undergone a meaningful transformation that emphasizes process and application as much as product. The practices we employ begin with a base of process standards of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation and connections. The second area teachers develop are "strands of mathematical proficiency":

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

New York State Common Core Learning Standards in Mathematics is organized into four content areas: operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations in base ten, rations and proportional relationships and expressions and equations.

In social studies, students explore various communities, languages, customs and family traditions as they relate to being a responsible a member of a local, state, national and global community. Curriculum maps at each grade level include New York State Learning Standards, Essential Questions and related literature. Through interdisciplinary instruction, students are guided in research projects to demonstrate their understanding of the social studies curriculum. For example, as a part of our fourth graders' Colonial America unit, students host a "Living Wax Museum", with children in costume able to explain, at the push of a button, the historical significance of the person or occupation they represent.

The science program nourishes students' curiosity about the natural world while engaging them in investigations to observe, describe, measure, record and organize data and draw conclusions. Science activities include our annual second grade trip to a local arboretum where students apply the soil testing and bird identification skills they have learned.

The visual arts program is an art history based approach with a three-prong focus: allowing students to become familiar with a wide variety of media, tools and techniques. Our program allows students to discuss and interpret art as a visual document. Also included in the arts are annual class plays for which students make sets, costumes, learn songs and lines for whole-school presentations.

Students participate in at least 30 minutes of music instruction per week. The vocal music program incorporates movement and music history with choir, band and orchestra opportunities for grade 4 and 5 students. Beginning in third grade, all students also learn to play the recorder, putting music reading skills to practical use.

Physical education occurs twice a week for all students. In PE, students learn basic sports skills with an emphasis on cooperation. Healthy habits are taught as students enjoy participation in programs such as maintaining our school kitchen garden through which the fun side of good nutrition is emphasized.

Technology is integrated into daily instruction as a tool to enhance instruction. Keyboarding, internet safety and basic presentation skills are also taught.

We are proud of the strong, balanced and rigorous curriculum offered at Elsmere Elementary School.

2. Reading/English:

The reading program at Elsmere Elementary is aligned to meet the New York State Core curriculum focusing on key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, range of reading and text complexity and responding to literature.

We achieve our literacy goals through a balanced literacy approach. It is designed to meet the needs of all students, which provides an approach to literacy encompassing the five areas of reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. We look at students as they begin to read, develop and reach the goal of independence. At the beginning reading stage, students learn how to read, with a focus on directionality of print, letter identification, sound/symbol relationships and high frequency words. They begin to read simple text with predictable and repetitive patterns. Developing readers then read longer texts. As students begin to read independently, they continue to acquire word attack skills and comprehension strategies. They are better able to make meaningful substitutions when reading, understand what they have read and retell a story. The independent reader is able to read text at an appropriate level without assistance, uses all the cueing systems, comprehends different genres at

various levels and often chooses to read independently. The independent reader is able to focus on higher level thinking skills and comprehend at a deeper level.

Elsmere Elementary uses the Reading Workshop as an instructional method that offers a block of time for independent reading. Incorporated into this, teachers use guided reading, which is a teacher-supported instructional procedure designed to teach students reading strategies as they are actively involved in the reading process. The teacher provides support during the reading and gradually withdraws this support to reach the goal of independence. The goal is for the text to be at level where the child can read with 90% accuracy, allowing the student to successfully control the story in the first reading with a few challenges and a high degree of success. In addition to guided reading, teachers are doing shared reading, interactive reading, literature circles, independent reading and reading to children.

Our school uses a variety of assessment tools to identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed for the students. In the primary grades (K-2), we use the Early Literacy Profile (ELP – developed by the district), Fountas & Pinnell and Rigby benchmark reading assessments. In the intermediate grades (3-5), we use the Fountas & Pinnell and Roe & Burns reading assessment. In addition, we are using AimsWeb as an assessment to benchmark students three times a year as well as progress monitor students who are struggling and receiving Response to Intervention (RtI). With these assessment tools, teachers are able to plan a individual literacy programs for students.

3. Mathematics:

The math curriculum at Elsmere Elementary School is based on the New York State Common Core Learning Standards for Math, which was recently adopted by the Bethlehem Central School District. The goal of this new curriculum is to foster a solid understanding of core mathematical concepts at each grade level, which will enable students to build linkages between concepts and skills in subsequent grade levels.

The staff at Elsmere Elementary uses Envisions math program (published by Pearson) as its primary resource and supplements math lessons with a variety of hands-on activities that include the use of technology, manipulatives such as foam ten-frames and cooperative learning. In addition to structured lessons on new material, students participate in daily math review activities that include spiraling of previously learned skills and concepts. Teachers at each grade level dedicate time each day for students to master math facts based upon the guidelines established through the Common Core Learning Standards.

Instruction is differentiated within the classroom with small group instruction intended to meet the various needs of students. Students identified through teacher observation, benchmark and standardized assessments may then receive additional support outside of the classroom. Academic intervention services support children who need to develop a stronger foundation in mathematics, while our Challenge program provides enrichment activities to extend a student's mathematical thinking. Both programs are provided by certified teachers who also serve as a resource to classroom teachers.

The Bethlehem CSD math department provides support to teachers in the form of on-site professional development. A math consultant meets with teachers on a regularly scheduled basis to share best practices and provide training in implementing foundational math skills. A math cabinet comprised of teachers from each of the elementary schools in our district, led by our district math supervisor, writes our interim assessments and provides resources to teachers. Teachers use these interim assessments to guide and enhance whole class and individual instruction.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Science education at Elsmere Elementary School encompasses the major fields of study for earth/space science, life science, chemistry, physics, and environmental science. Our curriculum includes objectives and lesson plans that allow students to be actively engaged in inquiry learning. Our science units are

supported with materials from science kits provided by the Elementary Science Program and Carolina Curriculum for Science and Math.

Each grade level follows a curriculum map through Rubicon Atlas Curriculum Management software that includes state standards, essential questions, activities, assessments and related literature. These maps are used by teachers to guide instruction and assess student understanding.

The Science Cabinet is comprised of administrators and teachers who work collaboratively throughout the year to ensure the curriculum is current and coordinated with all standards. For the past two years the cabinet has aligned our science curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards to support instruction with a variety of non-fiction texts and the meaningful use of technology in elementary science instruction.

Complex, non-fiction texts are used in each unit to meet the Common Core Learning Standards. This enables teachers to differentiate, individualize and enrich their instruction. Students read, write, and think critically in each unit.

Our fifth graders annually attend a week-long outdoor educational program. Nature's Classroom in Massachusetts offers our students a unique educational experience by creating a living-learning community that integrates social development with academic experiences. While away from home, students participate in activities such as a mock Underground Railroad experience and collaboratively creating a twelve-foot high geodesic dome from branches.

Third graders' study of astronomy includes the use of a portable planetarium. The unit culminates in a family presentation conducted by student "experts" who serve as tour-guides of the night skies for their parents.

5. Instructional Methods:

Elsmere Elementary teachers utilize multiple strategies and tools to create differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Instructional modifications occur in Elsmere's twelve general education and two special education classrooms. Related service providers, including speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, counselor, social worker, English Language Learner specialist, reading and math teachers, aides to students with disabilities and an assistive technology specialist work collaboratively with Elsmere's classroom teachers to best meet the needs of each student.

In general education classes, teachers utilize formal and informal assessments to determine strengths and needs of individual students. With this data, fluid math and ELA instructional groups are facilitated in classrooms. The progress of students in the high-risk category is further assessed using bi-weekly growth measures. Classroom teachers, related service providers and aides collaborate to identify research-based intervention strategies to meet student needs. If data indicates that a student's progress has stagnated, the Child Study Team meets to plan additional interventions. If a series of strategies have been utilized without leading to student success, the educational team may refer the student to the special education department for further evaluation and programming.

Our Challenge Program is available for students who, based on nationally normed assessments, are identified as talented and gifted. The Challenge teacher also provides teachers with enrichment materials and strategies to enhance the learning of all students.

Elsmere's special education teacher works in general education classes to provide students special education academic supports. Two self-contained special education classes for students with severe disabilities are an integral part of our school, providing an alternate approach to education from which all Elsmere staff, students and families benefit.

At Elsmere Elementary, technology is used to support instruction and meet the needs of students. Teachers utilize iPads, Smart Boards, a Smart Table, computers and adaptive hardware. Aides to students with disabilities assumed a leadership role in identifying and implementing many supports using technology. A variety of specialized software is also utilized, including Type-To-Learn, Co-Writer, Classroom Suite, and more. Teachers make daily use of two laptop carts that can be utilized in classrooms or the dedicated computer lab.

Elsmere faculty and staff are dedicated to providing the highest level of instruction for all students. Supports, strategies and tools ensure that all students, including struggling learners and students who excel academically are able to reach a high level of achievement.

6. Professional Development:

Elsmere Elementary staff is continuously engaged in improving practices. Three levels of professional development are employed to enhance student achievement and school improvement: in-house, district level and outside opportunities.

Professional development at the school level is on-going. Time is dedicated for "Continuous Improvement" to enable all faculty opportunities to collaboratively review student progress in order to determine and plan for areas of need. Formal data, such as that provided by AIMSweb and informal data, including student work samples, are used for this endeavor. Additionally, professional books are read and discussed by the entire faculty. This year, our faculty read Pathways to the Common Core, providing ideas for implementing New York State Common Core Learning Standards. In-house professional development also occurs on a smaller scale specific to student needs. For example, our intensive skills teachers offer regular trainings for faculty and support staff to develop competencies in modifying approaches to match student strengths.

Our district as a whole is also committed to enhancing teacher quality and student achievement. Professional developers are engaged to work with faculty on areas identified by survey and administrator observation. This year, for example, a professional math developer visited elementary schools three times to work directly with teachers on the common core math areas that teachers felt were the most challenging. Also, a professional developer presented to all primary and intermediate teachers reviewing the ELA Common Core curriculum and relating best instructional practices. Additionally, district and regional on-line catalogs offer a continuous array of professional development options, including many instructional technology courses during the school year and summer, for faculty and staff to attend free of charge.

Finally, district faculty attends institutes, workshops and conferences offered by other professionals who have deeply studied specific instructional areas. For example, a contingent of elementary teachers regularly attend Columbia Teacher's College programs in Manhattan, bringing back valuable professional knowledge for colleagues. When district AIMSweb data identified fluency as an overall area of need, district reading teachers attended a fluency workshop by renowned presenter, Tim Razinski. Our teachers then condensed this workshop and presented it to all district elementary teachers. Outside conferences on the horizon for Bethlehem faculty include technology, mathematics and science.

Elsmere is fortunate to be a part of a district that greatly values professional development. Student achievement rises and schools become stronger as faculty and staff work at the building and district level to identify and address areas for enhancement.

7. School Leadership:

Elsmere Elementary has one principal who oversees the school's daily operations, budget and student discipline. The principal embraces a shared leadership philosophy where faculty take ownership for projects and programs for which they have particular strengths or interests. These leadership

opportunities, recommended by administration and faculty, focus on academics, character, wellness and more. Each project is aligned with the school's mission and geared toward enhancing students' overall achievement.

In the area of academics, our Child Study Team (CST), led by the school psychologist, helps teachers support struggling learners. Core members of the CST: the reading teacher, special education teacher, speech therapist, guidance counselor, occupational therapist, principal and nurse, help teachers collect, analyze data and assess various research-based interventions to find strategies appropriate for the situation. The team then assists in implementing these strategies and collecting data. Often, team members work directly with students to improve their achievement. Additionally, the CST leads presentations for the faculty on data collection and Response to Intervention.

A hallmark of our school is the Elsmere PRIDE Team, created and led by classroom teachers and

A hallmark of our school is the Elsmere PRIDE Team, created and led by classroom teachers and therapists. For the past 15 years, this team has met monthly to discuss school climate issues and plan events to help reinforce positive character in our school. PRIDE traits: Personal Best, Respect and Responsibility, Integrity, Determination and Enthusiasm are woven into daily routines and highlighted at monthly assemblies. The PRIDE leadership serves to regularly remind students, parents and colleagues that such traits are key elements to a person's overall achievement. Programs and events created by PRIDE include Student of the Week, monthly assemblies focusing on each trait and special bulletin boards.

Our Physical Education teacher and school nurse partner in a shared leadership role to help students be healthy and active members of school. This team leads healthy eating, exercise and personal hygiene initiatives including a "Hoops for Heart" event, after school enrichment classes, Field Day and class health presentations. As these are a regular part of our offerings, they are funded by the PTA.

The shared leadership model of Elsmere Elementary has proven to be a successful way of utilizing the many skills and interests of our staff to enhance our overall academic program. While the school principal manages the day-to-day operations and keeps things running smoothly, the various teams led by school staff make our school a special and fun place for children.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: NYS Mathematics Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2011: CTB McGraw-Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & Level 4	81	84	84	98	96
Level 4	13	23	42	40	30
Number of students tested	47	43	38	58	53
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed				1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic	Disadvantaged St	tudents			
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	3	5	3		
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested			1	1	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1		1	1	2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	92	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	17	Masked
Number of students tested	4	4	5	12	7
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked		Masked		
Level 4	Masked		Masked		
Number of students tested	1		1		
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	2		2	3

NOTES:

Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

For the 2009-2010 school year results, the New York State Education Department raised the English language arts and math cut scores for the Basic and Proficient performance levels. Raising the bar in this manner has caused a statewide drop in the percent of students scoring at proficiency levels 3 and 4. A student scoring at or above the new Basic standard (Level 2) is on track to pass the English or math Regents exam required for high school graduation. A student scoring at or above the new Proficiency standard (Level 3) is on track to earn a college-ready score on the English or math Regents Examination. In the July 28, 2010 news release, Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education John King stated, 'These newly defined cut scores do not mean

that students who were previously scoring at the Proficient standard and are now labeled Basic have learned less. Rather, the lower numbers of students meeting the Proficient standard reflects that we are setting the bar higher and we expect students, teachers, and parents to reach even higher to achieve these new targets.' Additional information can be found in the news release materials at: http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/Grade3-8_Results07282010.html http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/Regents_Approve_Scoring_Changes.html

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: NYS ELA Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2011:CTB McGraw-Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-200
Testing Month	Apr	May	Apr	Jan	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES					
Levels 3 + Level 4	87	70	89	90	96
Level 4	6	5	39	22	21
Number of students tested	47	43	38	58	53
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Levels 3 + Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	3	5	3		
2. African American Students					
Levels 3 + Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested			1	1	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Levels 3 + Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4			Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested			1	1	2
4. Special Education Students					
Levels 3 + Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	67	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	8	Masked
Number of students tested	4	4	5	12	7
5. English Language Learner Students					
Levels 3 + Level 4			Masked		
Level 4			Masked		
Number of students tested			1		
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Levels 3 + Level 4	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	2		2	3

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: NYS Mathematics Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2012: CTB McGraw Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-200
Testing Month	Apr	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & Level 4	93	93	90	100	93
Level 4	56	48	55	40	43
Number of students tested	43	40	58	45	67
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	4	3	5		4
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & Level 4					Masked
Level 4					Masked
Number of students tested					3
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		1	1	1	2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	82	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	45	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	7	11	4	9
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 & Level 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1		2	3	3

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: NYS ELA Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2011: CTB McGraw-Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-200
Testing Month	Apr	May	Apr	Jan	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & Level 4	93	88	78	91	85
Level 4	12	8	24	7	15
Number of students tested	43	40	58	45	66
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1				
SUBGROUP SCORES					-
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	4	3	5		4
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & Level 4					Masked
Level 4					Masked
Number of students tested					3
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		1	1	1	2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	55	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	0	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	7	11	4	8
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 & Level 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked		Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1		2	3	3

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: NYS Mathematics Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2011: CTB McGraw Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-200
Testing Month	Apr	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & Level 4	84	88	87	97	89
Level 4	51	47	30	43	39
Number of students tested	43	59	46	58	64
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	7	5	4	1
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked			Masked	
Level 4	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	2			3	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1	2	2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & Level 4	Masked	67	Masked	Masked	67
Level 4	Masked	33	Masked	Masked	13
Number of students tested	7	12	6	9	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 & Level 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Level 3 & Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		2	2	2	2

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: NYS ELA Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: 2008-2012: CTB McGraw-Hill / 2012: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-200
Testing Month	Apr	May	Apr	Jan	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 4 + Level 4	88	80	74	97	91
Level 3	14	22	15	26	14
Number of students tested	43	59	46	58	64
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1				
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-econ	omic Disadv	antaged Stu	dents		
Level 4 + Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 3	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	5	7	5	4	1
2. African American Students					
Level 4 + Level 4	Masked			Masked	
Level 3	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	2			3	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 4 + Level 4	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 3	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	1	1	2	2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 4 + Level 4	Masked	50	Masked	Masked	67
Level 3	Masked	0	Masked	Masked	7
Number of students tested	7	12	6	9	15
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 4 + Level 4					
Level 3					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Pacific Islander					
Level 4 + Level 4		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Level 3		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		2	2	2	2